

Media Release

Yavapai County Sheriff's Office

Scott Mascher – Sheriff

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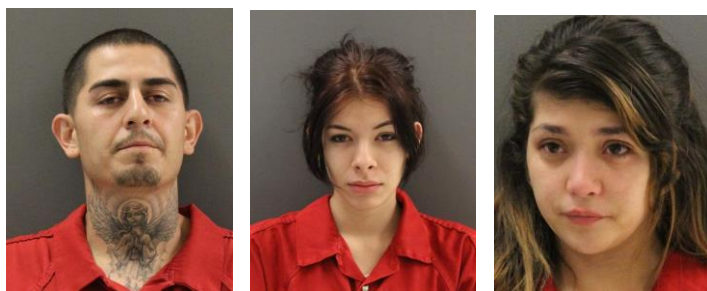
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August 5, 2015

Over a Pound and ½ of Heroin Seized during YCSO K9 Traffic Stop / 3 In-Custody



Torrez

Baldonado

Valencia

On August 3, 2015, at approximately 630AM, a YCSO K9 deputy stopped a blue Chrysler PT Cruiser for an equipment violation on a stretch of east I40 between Seligman and Ash Fork, Arizona. Michael Torrez, 29, was driving with Miranda Baldonado, 19, and Sarah Valencia, 19, as passengers. Baldonado was identified as the owner of the PT Cruiser. The three are from New Mexico.

While conversing with the occupants, deputies noticed numerous signs of deception as the occupants of the vehicle appeared more nervous than the innocent motoring public. They were unable to answer basic questions that a group of passengers sharing a destination would commonly know. This development along with other factors established during the traffic stop, led deputies to believe the likelihood that narcotic contraband was being transported. Baldonado denied the request by deputies for a consent search. As a result, a YCSO K9 was deployed for a 'free air' sniff of the vehicle exterior.

While walking around the vehicle, the deputy saw his K9 alert on the right side of the trunk/hatch area. A subsequent search of trunk revealed over 1 pound of heroin wrapped in condoms. Deputies also learned that Baldonado and Valencia had each concealed a quantity of heroin inside their 'private area' while the deputy was pulling them over. Valencia was able to retrieve the heroin and Baldonado was

unsuccessful. Baldonado was later hospitalized briefly to allow medical personnel to remove the heroin safely.

Additional heroin was discovered during a follow-up search of the vehicle. The total weight of heroin recovered came to 1.8 pounds.

Torrez is on parole out of the State of New Mexico related to drug trafficking.

As a result of the investigation, the suspects were booked at the Camp Verde Detention Center on charges including Transportation of Narcotic Drugs for Sale, Possession of Narcotic Drugs for Sale, Possession/Use of Narcotics Drugs and Possession of Drug Paraphernalia. The female suspects were additionally charged with Evidence Tampering. All remain in-custody. Bond amounts are: Torrez - \$180,000, Baldonado -\$150,000 and Valencia - \$150,000.

Detectives continue to follow-up regarding the source and destination of the heroin and the specific role each suspect has in the operation.

Citizens can contact the Yavapai County Sheriff's Office with information or questions at 928-771-3260 or the YCSO website:

www.ycsoaz.gov